

Yeshua

MISHPACHAH

A NEWSLETTER TO THE FAMILY OF JESUS FROM RESTORATION MINISTRIES

The Hebraic family is not simply an individual or private matter. Rather, it is an institution in which the whole community has a stake. Thus, the Hebrew word "mishpachah," meaning family, not only refers to parents and children, but to the whole extended family worldwide in the body of "Yeshua"—our Jesus.

Dear Friends,

Have you ever really considered taking your town or city and holding it for Jesus. We hope this letter will give you some insight.

Taking Our Cities For Jesus Our Lord

Jesus

The foundation of our lives is always a viable relationship with the Lord Jesus. A rabbi once said, "God is of **no importance** unless He is of **supreme importance.**" A Christian version might be, "If Jesus isn't Lord of **all**, He isn't Lord **at all.**" Everything emanates from our relationship with Jesus **as Lord**. If this isn't right, nothing in our lives will be right.

We were invited to spend Memorial Day with some brothers and sisters from Gateway Christian Fellowship in Denver. We left Colorado Springs for the 60-mile trip to Denver in shorts, with the sun out, and temp. near 70. About halfway there in the vicinity of Castle Rock we were pummeled by hail and snow and were held up for a time by an accident on the highway. With your picnic basket remember to bring chains!!!

During our afternoon discussion with the people from Gateway, the Spirit prompted in

Sue the phrase "relational responsibility." God showed her that the church is to be built on the followers of Jesus who display *relational responsibility* to Him and to those in their homes and home fellowships.

Each relationship we have carries with it many facets of responsibility. For instance, if a man is a husband, not only does he need to know his biblical responsibilities to his wife; he must also carry them out in a manner befitting his relationship with Jesus. [Remember our "early Church" statement: "If you want to know the extent of my relationship with Jesus Christ, look for it in the love He has given me for my spouse."]

Openness and intimacy in relationships are often complicated by *misperception*. This is true even in our relationship with Jesus. The relationship of two individuals can be complicated by the intricate mesh of the following:

1. Who I really am.
2. Who you really are.
3. Who I think I am. .
4. Who you think I am.
5. Who I think you are.
6. Who you think you are.

It can get complicated can't it? No wonder Paul admonishes, "*Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each*

other, just as in Christ God forgave you" (Eph. 4:32).

"I Am Who I Am"

There are tremendous ramifications for us in God's answer to Moses, "*I Am who I Am.*" As you go through the Bible, ponder the wonderful, caring *character of God*. If we fail to get to know Him as He is revealed in His Word, and neglect our responsibility to find out what pleases Him, we will 'create' Him in our own image—the way we *want* Him to be. We produce a counterfeit Christian experience.

At the human level, the best way to get to know people is to ask questions that cause them to reveal something about themselves. As you come before the Lord, continue to ask Him to reveal more of Himself through His Spirit and through those whose lives He is changing.

The Home

The next level of the diagram illustrates the Home as the primary place for the development of Christ-likeness. This occurs through the humility and repentance necessary if love is to grow in your marriage.

The home is also the place where loving relationships are passed along to the next gener-

Equipping the Church to Go Back for its Future

ation: "Has not the LORD made² with Him, may judge and condemn them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth" (Mal. 2:15).

Each individual and family member needs to see himself as an emissary of Jesus in his or her neighborhood, school, workplace. Jesus tells us, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples [in your neighborhoods, workplaces, schools, etc.], baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age" (Mat. 28:18-20). Too often we in the Church have limited this passage as applying to evangelism. Rather, in the early Church an evangelist was a church planter who came alongside disciples on a daily basis. All of us are to teach people to obey God's commands (Mt 28:20). "Commands, that's Old Testament," you say. There are 613 commands in the OT, and over 1,000 commands in the New Testament!

So start teaching!

"Who is my neighbor?"

This question was proposed to Jesus in response to His command, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Does the thought of your neighbors going into a Christless eternity disturb you at all? Does it bother you that Jesus, who suffered and died to offer your neighbors eternity

failed to be the neighbors who cared enough to share the Gospel with love? [Many years ago a man went forward at a Billy Graham Crusade. The counselor who approached him was a man with whom he had worked for over 15 years. He asked the counselor, "Why didn't you ever tell me about Jesus?" Don't let one of your neighbors say this to you on the Judgment Day.]

How many neighbors can you and your family name? How often does your family intercede for them? Are you willing to take responsibility for the unbelieving souls in your neighborhood by interceding and serving them in love?

The Neighborhood Home Fellowship

The Neighborhood Home Fellowship provides communal support for upholding righteousness so that our prayers may be answered. It provides *kinship* relationships for families, singles, and widows. Our Hebraic ancestors gathered in homes in their neighborhoods, and the Bible tells us, "The Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47). It is our goal in Colorado Springs to work in conjunction with others who have put their trust in Jesus until every neighborhood has a home fellowship taking responsibility for the souls who are heading for a Christless eternity. Through intercession and neighborhood friendships we believe we will see the kingdom of God expand in this city. How about yours?

Outreach: Networking Relationships

Consider this: The population of Colorado Springs is about 400,000+. Statistically, the average adult in the US knows over 100 people. $100 \times 100 \times 100 = 1,000,000$. 100 followers of Jesus in Colo. Spgs. are three people away from knowing 1 million!!! Even a small, committed group of God's people could reach many more than the population of Colorado Springs. Consider this strategy in your own town or community.

You may find it difficult to start a home fellowship in your particular neighborhood. Our experience indicates that an initial home fellowship may comprise people from several neighborhoods. But as these expand and multiply, the goal to permeate each neighborhood with a home fellowship can then become a reality.

Outreach is achieved in neighborhoods through individuals and home fellowships. In this context you extend friendship to unbelievers that may develop into opportunities to make the gospel come alive.

Righteous, praying people have power.

Satan will do anything to stop them

Since intercession is so critical to the advancement of God's Kingdom, we have enclosed a copy of David Wilkerson's latest letter, *A Conspiracy of Interruption*. When I assumed the position of controller at a Christian college two decades ago, prayer was sparse on campus. I found that the plumber and the carpenter in the mainte-

nance department were the only³ together stays together” is an incomplete saying:

Congregation of Home Fellowships

Congregational gatherings on the Sabbath are for glorifying our Father and for edifying each other in our devotion to God.

The congregating of God’s people was not designed to reach unbelievers. They may show up in our midst as Paul hypothesizes in 1Cor. 14:24,25, but evangelizing unbelievers is not the intent of the gathering. In fellowship with our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, believers gather to glorify God and to edify the people of God. The gathering together of God’s people has been the central focus of Open Church Ministries (OCM). Those of you who have read *Restoring the Early Church* know that we espouse the application of 1 Cor. 14:26 that is emphasized by OCM: “*What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church.*” Participation was part of the synagogue practice, and thus, of the early Church. Constantine’s institutional approach of temple buildings and elevated clergy robbed believers of the wonderful beauty of participation and exuberant, serendipitous praise. **God** is restoring these to His people once again.

Then I got my office to start each day in prayer. After a month or so I commented to my office staff that every time I left to go to the Tuesday prayer meeting, Satan conspired against me. They all chuckled. Without telling anyone, my secretary started to record on her calendar my daily lunchtime activities. Several months went by. During an office meeting she said, “Remember when we all laughed when Mike mentioned there was a conspiracy to keep him from the Tues. prayer meeting?” She told them that on Mon., Wed., Thur., and Fri., nothing interfered with my departure from the office. On every Tuesday something occurred; from the president of the college calling, to disgruntled parents stopping by.

At the retreat center I asked a large group of clergy if any of them had a routine time of prayer with their families. Other than grace before a meal, not one of them prayed with his family. “The family that prays

see the city-wide cooperation of congregations. It won’t be long until we are speaking of the ‘Church at Richmond’ or the ‘Church at Colorado Springs!’ We look forward to the day that a letter can be written to the *entire* body of believers in a city, “*To the church of our Lord Jesus Christ in.....*” Wishful thinking, *never!!!* Jesus **is** building His Church, and people who love Him above all else are joining Him in this.

Have you ever pondered ‘the nodes’?

A few months ago, a friend who had been in ministry for years pointed to a large oak in his back yard. “Mike, the limbs in the top of that tree represent ministries like Child Evangelism, campus ministries, and others that affect a certain segment of people. The message of Restoration is right there at the base of the trunk, just above the roots. Everyone who claims to follow Jesus is affected by this message. Yet many are going to resist the *personal responsibility* required in a close relationship with Jesus and with the significant others in their lives.”

In a discussion with Jim Rutz and Dean Cozzens, President and VP of OCM, respectively, Jim asked me how I compared the message of Restoration to other truths the Lord has been revealing to the Church. I mentioned to him what my friend had told us. [Since our arrival back from Israel with this message, the humble ones who have been earnestly seeking God have been telling us, “You are confirming what the Lord has already been showing me. I did-

Congregations in a City

As the Greek philosophical spirit and its man-made doctrines that now divide the Church are unmasked, we will

n't know about all these other⁴ facets.]"

Dean, who had been raised on a farm in northeast Colorado, exclaimed, "As you are talking about Jesus, the home, neighborhood home fellowships, and the open congregational gatherings, it reminds me of 'the nodes'. Nodes are a very special part of the plant near its base. As the nutrients move from the root system up toward the top of the plant, they must first move through the node. The node somehow adjusts the frequency of the nutrients, making them compatible and more beneficial to the plant. Certain kinds of caustic fertilizers release the wrong kinds of compounds and congest the node. The node begins to restrict the flow of nutrients from the roots up through the plant. The growth of the plant is stunted, vastly limiting its fruit-bearing capacity."

Boy!!! As Dean mentioned the effect of caustic fertilizer on the nodes, the Holy Spirit gave me a vivid image of the program emphasis in the Church today. A vast majority of programs are like 'caustic fertilizers', clogging us with busyness and failing to produce the fruit of intimacy and spiritual power. Success in the

Church today is primarily evaluated by size, not salvations. Our Lord evaluates everything by His outworking of love: "For in Christ Jesus...the only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through [agape] love" (Gal. 6:5). God is seeking for His people to develop a humble and repentant heart that produces love, mercy, kindness. [Refer to the diagram on pg.1]. The keys to doing this are: maintaining an intimate relationship with Jesus; permitting Him to circumcise from us all that is not like Him (Col. 2:11); and appropriating power in His grace through the Holy Spirit.

Programs keep us busy, not intimate. Busyness "clogs the nodes" and thwarts the fruitfulness that relational intimacy yields. Programs can never produce genuine love and consideration toward the ones who can never repay us. Put yourself in this scenario: "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world...I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me'" (Mat. 25:34,40).

Our love,
Mike & Sue Dowgiewicz

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by Mike & Sue Dowgiewicz

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